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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 KABUL 005421

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DEPT FOR SCA/FO DAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A
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TAGS: MCAP MOPS PGOV PREL PTER AF
SUBJECT: PRT TARIN KOWT - GOVERNOR MONIB'S MILITIA

Classified By: A/DCM ASIMMONS, for Reasons 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Uruzgan's Governor Monib formed a militia to make up for a severe shortage of Afghan security forces and open challenges to his authority. He created a militia force of approximately 1300 by reaching out to tribal leaders, many of whom were marginalized by his predecessor. He has sent this force into action on a number of occasions in recent months but it has proven to be ill-trained, undisciplined and outgunned by the enemy. Despite their recent failures, Afghans continue to be willing to join forces across tribal lines to protect their villages, and militia members constitute a large recruiting pool for the Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP). Although the Auxiliary Police are being quickly and simultaneously recruited, trained and deployed in provinces in the south and east to address the concerns of the provincial leadership as well as the leadership in the central government, the ANAP is not a self-sufficient force and will need support from the better trained and more heavily equipped Afghan National Army. End Summary.

Problem: Where are the Afghan Security Forces?

¶2. (SBU) Uruzgan Governor Abdul Hakim Monib assumed office in March 2006. He was an outsider with no local support base within the province and with few friends upon whom he could depend to secure the province or guarantee his personal security. Former Governor Jan Mohammed Khan openly sought to undermine Monib's power which resulted in a further destabilization of this province. The Afghan National Police (ANP) and Afghan Highway Police (AHP) were thinly disguised militias with primary loyalty to their former mujahadeen commanders. ANP Chief Rozie Khan was relieved of his command in May, after which most of his men left the force taking their weapons with them. What remained were less than 90 officially trained ANP who lacked weapons, ammunition and vehicles. Monib could not rely on the protection of the AHP Commander

Col. Matiollah, who is an effective anti-Taliban leader and fighter, but also has family ties to the previous governor that cast doubt on his willingness to provide adequate protection to Monib.

¶3. (C) Some temporary relief was provided by a new provincial police commander, General Mohammed Qasim, and the arrival of 100 Afghan Standby Police (ASP) in June, but the ASP mission was confined to the protection of the governor and Tarin Kowt city and ended the first week of September. General Qasim remains but is assessed by Dutch and police mentors as a weak leader. Governor Monib recently told the Dutch PRT Commander that he agrees with this assessment and is considering replacing him. (Note: Officially, Governor Monib does not have the authority to replace police chiefs; that decision should be made by the Minister of Interior. End note.)

¶4. (SBU) Uruzgan also lacks sufficient numbers of ANA. There are two kandaks (battalions) assigned to Uruzgan. Each is supposed to consist of approx. 612 people, but in practice, actual troop levels have stood, on average, at 400-500 total. In August most members of the kandaks began a long deserved leave, after being deployed and engaged with the enemy for up to 18 months. This resulted in a drop to less than 100 ANA combat troops in the entire province. These troops' leave should end in November, but the contracts of most of the ANA are also scheduled to expire at the same time. This has prompted concerns that if many do not re-enlist, ANA troop levels may remain very low for the foreseeable future.

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A Desperate Solution: Form a Militia

¶5. (SBU) Governor Monib moved to help solve this shortage of Afghan security forces by forming a militia. Over the summer, he asked tribal leaders - many marginalized by the Populzai tribe provincial leadership under Governor Jan Mohammed - to recruit security forces for their local areas. According to Gov. Monib, he currently is paying up to 1270 militia members or "police" as he calls them. They are distributed among the provincial districts as follows:

Tarin Kowt	500
Deh Rawood	220
Chora	40-150
Chenartu	100
Cahar Cineh	150
Khas Uruzgan	150

¶6. (SBU) The actual numbers and disposition of this militia have yet to be confirmed as Monib and Gen. Qasim have only shared partial information on actual district deployments. Efforts to map the deployment of these forces continue. So far, the Dutch were able to confirm the presence of the 220 militiamen in Deh Rawood.

¶7. (C) Governor Monib pays his militia salaries substantially higher than those of the ANP. Funds for the salaries come partially from the Governor's reported \$150,000 a month discretionary fund. Using this and other available funds, the Governor pays each militia and policeman \$150 per month vice the officially sanctioned \$70 per month. His justification is that police salaries are too low and that he cannot recruit candidates willing to work as police or ANAP for the official salary. (Note: Dutch and US forces pay Afghan Security Guards \$300 per

month in Uruzgan.)

The Militia in Action: Dubious Track Record

¶8. (SBU) An exact deployment date for the governor's militia is unclear, but Dutch and US forces began observing these forces in action mid-August.

¶9. (C) On August 18, Governor Monib directed local police together with this militia to raid the Tarin Kowt bazaar and seize contraband including poppy, opium, and alcoholic beverages. The raid quickly got out of hand and many ANP withdrew their participation. Shop keepers were harassed, money and goods stolen and property destroyed. Reports of the amount of opium seized varied from a few hundred to 6000 pounds. When the Dutch PRT police team inspected the local police evidence locker shortly after the raid, only a small amount of opium was in storage. When asked about the missing contraband, Gov. Monib said he ordered it destroyed but this claim remains unsubstantiated.

¶10. (C) On September 5, ANA and a US Special Forces unit were attacked as they approached a checkpoint in eastern Tarin Kowt district on the road to Deh Rawood. ANA and US forces assumed it was an ambush by hostile forces but later discovered their attackers were "police" sent by the Governor to reinforce a newly established checkpoint that he had heard would be attacked by the Taliban. Fortunately, casualties were limited to three ANA and militia wounded in action (WIA). US forces involved in the incident, which occurred on a bright, moonlit night, have doubts about Monib's account that the incident was accidental.

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¶11. (C) On September 21, a militia convoy under the command of Nabi Khan, a Ghilzai leader from Surkh Morghab, came under attack in Abas Ali, south of Chora and Kala Kala, in the Baluchi Valley. Later, militia under the command of Chora district Police Chief and Populzai tribal leader Farouk were also drawn into the fight. The attack lasted several hours and ended only with nightfall. Seven militia members were WIA (2 later died), and several police vehicles were heavily damaged. The next day, Gov. Monib confided to the PRT Commander that he had sent the militia in on the basis of a tip that there were a few Taliban in the area. However, when his men arrived in the village, they discovered that the village inhabitants had left and the Taliban had staged an ambush.

¶12. (C) The nearby Kala Kala checkpoint came under repeated anti-Coalition militia (ACM) attack during recent weeks. In these attacks, the militia, armed only with AK-47's, were seriously outgunned by ACM using mortars, rocket-propelled-grenades and PKM machine guns. Dutch Special Operations Forces have provided support and called in close air support on several occasions. Provincial Police Chief Gen. Qasim says that ANP and militia forces are running low on ammunition and asked Dutch and US forces to replenish supplies.

¶13. (C) Most recently, on September 18, provincial NDS Chief Abdul Rauf raided and seized weapons from compounds controlled by the militia. Acting on orders from the Governor, the militia surrounded Rauf's compound, and after several hours, succeeded in recovering the weapons. A Dutch print journalist in Tarin Kowt at the time published a sensational account of the standoff which portrayed the incident as a siege ordered by Governor Monib.

¶14. (C) Rauf accuses Governor Monib of using this militia to settle scores with local leaders and to attack ISAF and Coalition forces. He notes that some militia members are suspected ACM. These accusations may be part of an escalating feud between Rauf and Monib, a theory for which some corroborating information exists. Monib counters these claims saying that he is using the militia as a means to effect tribal reconciliation, reaching out to leaders of ethnic groups that had been disenfranchised and even actively persecuted by the Populzai-dominated former leadership of the province. According to Monib, some of these leaders have in the past been falsely accused of ACM affiliation by members of rival groups. (Note: At Monib's insistence, MOI fired Rauf in early October. End Note.)

Transition to Auxiliary Police

¶15. (SBU) The Governor's militia is ill-trained, undisciplined, poorly equipped and not under the command and control of Ministry of Interior authorities. Out-gunned by the ACM, it is further hampered by poor communications and logistical support. In the future, their movements and use must be coordinated with those of the ANA, ANP, and international forces operating in the province to avoid future friendly-fire incidents. Nonetheless, these militia have demonstrated their willingness to work with GoA authorities to protect their villages. Provincial leaders and international forces therefore view them, along with the soon-to-be disbanded AHP, as a recruiting pool for the Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP).

¶16. (C) Dutch and US forces in Uruzgan have decided

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that efforts to train, equip and deploy the new ANAP must be initiated immediately given the critical shortage of ANA and ANP currently in the province and the fact that the Governor's militia already exists. In addition, they plan to call on this new force to secure territory and man checkpoints in upcoming operations that must take place to reduce increasing ACM strength before winter.

¶17. (SBU) Therefore, the Dutch, with support from US forces and the Ministry of Interior, initiated ANAP training on October 28. The training will last two weeks and consist of basic police and counter-insurgency courses. In addition, militia deployed at key checkpoints will receive basic training at their current locations.

Comment

¶18. (C) Monib's militia may have occasionally contributed to the province's security but have more likely acted as a net detractor. Their disbandment and reformation as trained ANAP, commanded and paid from Kabul, should increase their effectiveness as an anti-Taliban force. Unfortunately, as the ANAP is still in the beginning stages of training, equipping and deployment, it is not yet capable of independent action and remains reliant on the ANP. In Uruzgan's counter-insurgency environment, it will need the support of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANA and ANP).

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